



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

MAR 07 2011

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

President Luki Akelkok Sr.
Ekwok Village Council
P O Box 70
Ekwok, Alaska 99580

RE: Invitation for Tribal Consultation

Dear President Akelkok:

EPA sent an announcement to your tribal government on February 7th, 2011 regarding the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. This letter is in regards to the specific opportunities for your tribal government to participate in this scientific assessment.

The purpose of this inquiry is to gather scientific and technical information and data on the potential environmental impacts to the watershed of Bristol Bay (Nushagak/Mulchatna, and Kvichak watersheds) and to inform EPA's decision on the need for protections under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). EPA intends to work with federal, tribal and state governments in reviewing the data and analyzing the information. EPA will also share the information with the public and seek input before deciding whether to initiate an advanced action under 404(c) or to take other appropriate action.

There are three primary opportunities for your tribal government to participate: first, through Government-to-Government Consultation; second, through the public involvement processes; and, third, through the Intergovernmental Technical Review Team. Those opportunities are further explained below.

EPA invites your tribal government to request Tribal Consultation. If your tribal government would like to request Tribal Consultation please respond by **March 31st, 2011**. Tami Fordham, Alaska Resource Extraction Tribal Policy Advisor, and Westley Foster, Alaska Tribal Coordinator, will work with the tribal governments who request consultation to put together the Government-to-Government Consultation Plan. Please submit the attached response form and any tribal government consultation protocol documents to Tami Fordham, her contact information is included in the attached Tribal Consultation Questionnaire document.

The public involvement process is another opportunity for your tribal government and community to participate in this Watershed Assessment. EPA anticipates holding public meetings in Anchorage and 3 locations in the Kvichak and Nushagak watersheds this summer. This will be an opportunity to review the draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment and provide comments. As soon as the locations and specific times have been determined EPA will notify your tribal government. For more information about the project or to be added to the listserv that has been created please visit the following website: www.epa.gov/region10/bristolbay.

In addition to the Government-to-Government Consultation and public involvement process, EPA will hold two meetings with Tribal, State and Federal government experts. At these meetings, the experts will review and provide technical comments to EPA on the pre-public draft of the Watershed Assessment. These meetings will likely be in Anchorage in April/May to review an outline of the draft document, and then again in late summer/early fall to review a final draft of the document prior to peer review. EPA will coordinate, as needed, with this group of experts following the public information sessions. EPA is hoping that the tribal governments interested in participating will work together to identify 3 representatives to participate on this team.

EPA recognizes that the tribal governments have been collecting data in the Bristol Bay region and have expertise related to Traditional Knowledge, subsistence and cultural information that may help shape the information that is included in the Watershed Assessment. If your tribal government has any technical data that you feel is pertinent to this Watershed Assessment please submit it to the Senior Management Lead, Rick Parkin, his address and contact information is included below. The scope allowed for our watershed assessment under the Clean Water Act is narrow. We will be evaluating the potential for large scale development to have "unacceptable adverse effects on municipal water supplies, shellfish and fishery areas, wildlife or recreational areas." We anticipate fisheries to be our primary concern and seek information specifically in this area. EPA would like to receive any data no later than **March 31st, 2011**.

There will be a teleconference on **March 17th, 2011 at 9:30AM Alaska Time** to discuss the various opportunities for tribal governments to be involved in the watershed assessment. The call in number is Nonresponsive- Conference Code **code** Nonresponsive- Conference Code

I look forward to working with your tribal government during this assessment. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Rick Parkin at 206-553-8574 or parkin.richard@epa.gov. Rick's mailing address is 1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900, ETPA-087, Seattle, Washington 98101.

Sincerely,



Dennis J. McLerran
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Tribal Environmental Coordinators (thru email)
Richard Parkin, Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment Senior Management Lead, EPA
Westley Foster, Alaska Tribal Coordinator, EPA
Tami Fordham, Alaska Resource Extraction Tribal Policy Advisor, EPA